

On January 10, 2011, Congressman Quigley appeared on MSNBC to discuss common-sense gun control in the wake of the tragic shooting of U.S. Representative and 19 others in Tucson, Arizona. Video of the interview and a transcript are available below.

Reporter: Congressman Mike Quigley, Democrat from Illinois, he's an avid supporter of gun control, who's urged the Obama administration to reinstate the ban on assault weapons. Congressman, thank you so much for joining me. Under these circumstances, I'd first like to ask you how do you feel now that this is all settling in? Before it seemed so surreal that this had happened, but we know that Congresswoman Giffords is fighting for her life, we know a federal judge's life was lost, we know a nine-year old child. How do you process this at this moment?

MQ: Well, thank you for having me. And you're right, it's a shocking situation and it takes awhile to sink in. You know, I came up through staff and I think about those public servants that were with Ms. Giffords, you know, and one of them lost their lives. And, you know, I think about my own staff and they're at these community meetings with me all the time. I'm sure their families feel just as concerned about them as anyone is concerned about their members of Congress.

Reporter: Are you worried about your safety?

MQ: I don't think I've ever worried about my safety, obviously I think it's shaken up my family a little more than me. I think most members recognize that there's always a degree of risk. The contentious health care debate certainly rose all of this, and there was, if not threats, extraordinarily heated discussions and I guess highly emotional calls to all of our offices. Some of them perhaps beyond what they should be. So, I think it shook up a lot of folks and I think it's given us all pause as not just to our security, but to our rhetoric.

Reporter: What security changes might you recommend, if any, at this point? We know there's a meeting on Wednesday, and I should note to our audience who are watching, we signed a condolence book in Washington for the victims, including Congresswoman Giffords, who again doctors are holding onto hope that she will survive this and be with her family very soon, at her side. I've got to ask you, what changes do you believe or would you recommend at this point, Congressman Quigley?

MQ: I just don't see that there's much they can do, but the 435 members as you say, are constantly in motion. Ms. Giffords left Washington, DC as we all did late Friday afternoon, and as you can see, she had a very long flight home, probably got home just in time to get ready for the next day, and then out early the next morning meeting constituents. I took the train home from O'Hare airport. There's just too many instances, there's just too much cost and expense. To a certain extent, we're at the mercy of the public. But if we lose this, we lose this contact, it's something very striking. I think our democratic process loses something if our members of the people's House can't communicate with the public. I'm going to a community meeting tonight,

and many others this week. I just don't see anything that's viable that would work.

Reporter: And the other part of this debate has been obviously rhetoric and gun control. I want to talk to you about the gun control angle of this suspected shooter had extended or high-capacity magazines that carried up to thirty rounds, two of them. According to reports, was attempting to put another magazine in when he was tackled by those brave people. These magazines that hold thirty rounds used to be banned and now you can legally purchase them.

MQ: I understand what the Supreme Court was trying to do in their recent decision striking down a Chicago gun law. But, even there, they drew a line. There is a difference between protecting your home and your family and your business and hunters and sportsmen's rights to have guns, but when you have a high-volume magazine, or an assault weapon, or as we see that used to have armor-piercing bullets. You know, you're not hunting deer or protecting your home, you're hunting people, and this isn't reasonable and we have a right to protect ourselves from such dangers.

Reporter: You use this incident, if you will, to bring up new legislation, to carry on the fight, to perhaps get these out of the hands, these high capacity magazines, if nothing else out of the hands of people.

MQ: You know, unfortunately it takes an incident like this, a tragedy, for people to discuss it. But I talked with my staff in Washington, DC just last week about the gun show loophole. In

thirty-three states you can go and buy any weapon you want without a single background check, including a criminal background check. You can be banned from getting on an airplane because you are a threat, but you can go to a state bordering mine, Indiana, and buy an assault weapon without a single background check. I don't think use is the right term, some would suggest that it's opportunistic to even talk about it. What my response to that is, do we have to wait a certain period of time after every tragedy? After Columbine, after Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois, Pentagon shooting, Fort Hood, the Holocaust Museum, you could go on and on. And, oh, by the way, in my hometown of Chicago there's a tragedy like this just about every weekend. So, I don't think use is perhaps the right term, but I'd like to think tragedies let people get to the discussion here on what's appropriate.

Reporter: Alright. Congressman Quigley, thank you very much, I greatly appreciate your time.